

*On Gaining an Immediate Penalty for Driving a Heavily
Burdened Horse without Mercy¹*

In Kawachi 河内 province² there was once a man named Isowake 石別 who used to sell melons. He would saddle a horse³ with an overwhelming burden and, if it failed to move, would whip it angrily and drive it forward. The horse staggered along with its eyes full of tears. When Isowake had sold all of the melons, he would then kill the horse. After he had killed a number of horses in this way, Isowake happened to look into a kettle of boiling water, whereupon his two eyes fell into the kettle and were boiled.

Swift is the penalty for evil deeds. How can we not believe in the law of karmic causality? Beasts in the present life might have been our parents in a past life. We pass through the six modes of existence⁴ and four manners of birth.⁵ Reflection shows us that we cannot be without mercy.⁶

1. Cf. *Konjaku monogatari shū* (XX, 29).

2. Present Ōsaka-fu.

3. Although this story does not give any date, the use of a horse may indicate a date later than the seventh century, when horses began to be used widely. See Naoki, *Nihon kodai heiseishi no kenkyū*, 200.

4. 六道 *rokudō*; heaven, man, *asura*, animal, hungry ghosts, and hell (being). See Chap. I(2)a, n. 126.

5. 四生 *shishō*; 胎生 (*jarāyuja*) birth from the womb (man, animal), 卵生 (*aṇḍaja*) birth from the egg (bird), 濕生 (*samsvedaja*) birth from moisture (insect), and 化生 (*upapāduka*) emanation by the force of karma (heavenly being, hell being).

6. 慈悲 *jihi*; see I.10, n. 5.